

REMARKS BY CONG. HENRY A. WAXMAN
HEALTHY SOLUTIONS PRESS CONFERENCE
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I'm proud to stand with you here today in this campaign for simple justice.

We seek justice for legal immigrant families who are denied basic health and food stamp benefits because of the continuing effect of mean-spirited and just plain discriminatory restrictions that are an unfortunate legacy of the welfare reform law we passed five years ago.

It's bad enough that we passed this policy in the first place. But it's inexcusable that we have failed to remedy it.

The bill that Congressman Diaz-Balart and I have sponsored in the House, and Senators Graham and Chafee have led the fight for in the Senate, would take the simple step of giving States the option to give Medicaid and health care benefits through the Child Health or CHIP program to legal immigrant children and pregnant women. It ends the ridiculous five year waiting period. It eliminates the attribution of sponsor's income that blocks eligibility for coverage.

It's simply a sensible and humane policy to give health care benefits to people who need them, who need them to grow up with a healthy start in life. Everybody benefits from that.

This isn't a radical policy, and it isn't a partisan policy. We've got lots of cosponsors from both sides of the aisle. We've got the endorsement of the National Governors' Association, and the support of Republican and Democratic governors alike.

It's past time that we ended this shameful discrimination. With the energy and commitment of all of you here in this room, we've got to carry that message forward and carry these three bills on to victory.